

## CONCERNING A POLICY

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In 1922, Ortmann and Walker<sup>1</sup> published a paper dealing with several changes in the nomenclature of some North American Unionidae. The expressed opinion given in this paper was really that of three men, Dr. H. A. Pilsbry included.

Ortmann and Walker (op. cit. p. 3), agreed that with any species over which they had a difference of opinion as to its nomenclatural standing, the decision of Pilsbry relative to that species would be accepted as final.

Since the above was published there has been an attempt to bring back again the use of some of the discarded names of Rafinesque. The question now raised is—what will be the eventual status of Unionid nomenclature if no agreement of names can ever be reached? These men took a fair stand in the matter, selecting the first name that could be definitely associated with a given species—showing no favoritism in the preference for any particular author. Priority ruled in all cases where more than one description pertained to the same species. Abiding by their decisions, we automatically “fix” some of these troublesome forms and the names employed come to have a definite meaning.

It seems as though the work of these authors can be taken as final, their decisional names accepted as solving certain taxonomic problems and instituting a policy which if accepted will clear a portion of the Unionid field which is still befogged with a superfluity of names. We, in the field of taxonomy, sometimes take the stand that systematic zoölogy is the end and not the means and that all other phases of biologic study as subservient to it. Developments due to increased knowledge and new discoveries are naturally going to affect classification, but progress in this line is certainly going to remain dormant as long as no settlement is ever reached concerning the validity of a name.

<sup>1</sup> Ortmann, A. E., and B. Walker, 1922. *Uni. of Mich., Mus. of Zool., Occ. pap.*, no. 112.

The material increase of interest and workers in experimental zoölogy, genetics and ecology is making a greater demand upon the taxonomist for the exact names of the animals used in the various lines of work. Fluctuating names are not adding to the value of this work or to ease in obtaining bibliographic references.

A policy of acceptance, when based upon the work of recognized authorities, will go a long way towards smoothing out some of these difficulties.

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#### NOTES AND NEWS

MRS. MAXWELL'S CENTENNIAL COLLECTION OF SHELLS.—I have just discovered Ernest Ingersoll's paper on "New shells from Colorado" (American Naturalist, X, 745-747, 1876), listing the species of non-marine shells in the Mrs. M. A. Maxwell Colorado collection at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. This was the collection that attracted so much attention at Philadelphia, because it was one of the earliest (if not the earliest) attempts on a large scale at habitat group work in America. However, it included some unlabelled invertebrate material from other states. Unfortunately Ingersoll assumed that all the material was from Colorado, hence the record of such species as *Goniobasis pulchella* and *G. livescens*. *Physa heterostropha* and some others may, however, have been only incorrect identifications of real Colorado shells. *Patula cooperi*, "said to be abundant about Boulder", is doubtless *Oreohelix strigosa depressa* (Ckll.), which is the common form in that vicinity. I call attention to this paper only that others who may happen to see it may not be misled by it. *Goniobasis* has not been found in the Rocky Mountain states south of Montana.—JUNIOUS HENDERSON.

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IN A LETTER FROM DR. PILSBRY dated Ancon, July 20th, he says: "We returned to Balboa for fuel oil, etc., before proceeding to the Marquesas. I have collected enough to keep